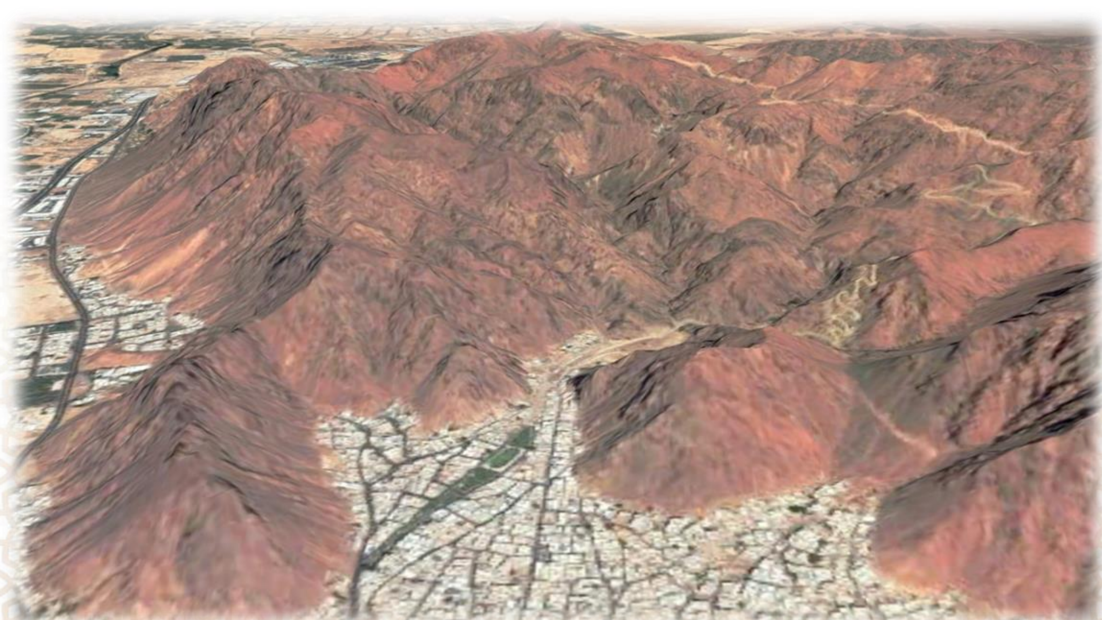
Islamic Academy of Coventry

Sīrah of Muḥammad ﷺ

Part 17
The Battle of Uḥud (I)

Maulānā Ebrahim Noor



Sīrah of Muḥammad صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ
Part 17 – The Battle of Uḥud (I)
1st Edition – 2020

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Contents



Introduction

The second year of Rasūlullāh’s صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ stay in Madīnah saw as many as eight expeditons in which he participated. These included the battles of al-Abwā’, Bawāṭ, Sawīq and al-ʿUshayrah. The great victory of Badr also took place in this year. Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ also sent many Sarāya (expeditions in which he did not take part in) to places like Kinānah & Nakhlah.

In the month of Shawwāl, the Banū Qaynuqah broke their treaty with Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. They were one of the three Jewish tribes who Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ made peace with when he arrived in Madīnah. The Muslim army laid siege to their forts and the Banū Qaynuqah finally surrendered. Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ passed the sentence that they be exiled from Madīnah.

Abū Sufyān ibn Ḥarb had not taken part in the battle of Badr himself as he had been with the trade caravan which managed to evade the Muslim army. After the Qurayshi defeat he made an oath to attack Madīnah.

He travelled north from Makkah with his army until he reached a date orchard in ʿĀrīḍ, which was a locality on the outskirts of Madīnah. The band killed two people and fled back to Makkah with Abū Sufyān thinking his oath had been fulfilled. When

Rasūlullāh ﷺ found out about this attack, he followed in pursuit but the Quraysh managed to get away.

Many commandments also became compulsory in this year, like fasting in the month of Ramadān, the obligatory alms - Zakāt and the Ṣadaqāt al-Fiṭr. Rasūlullāh ﷺ also led both Eid Ṣalāh for the first time this year. On the occasion of Eid al-Aḍhā', Rasūlullāh ﷺ sacrificed two rams, one on behalf of himself and one on behalf of the Ummah.

Also, in this year, the youngest daughter of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, Fāṭimah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهَا married ʿAlī رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ. Both Abū Bakr رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ and ʿUmar رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ had proposed for her but Rasūlullāh ﷺ remained quiet. Both the dear Companions رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا then advised ʿAlī رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ to propose for her and this proposal was accepted. The dowry which was given to Fāṭimah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهَا is still used as a basis for many of the dowries today.

Kaʿab ibn al-Ashraf was a resident of Madīnah. However, he harboured great enmity towards Rasūlullāh ﷺ and the Muslims. He was always finding opportunities to cause them harm. Upon Rasūlullāh ﷺ request, Muḥammad ibn Maslamah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ and a few Companions رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ hatched a plan and managed to put an end to his treachery once and for all.

The threat to the Muslims was constant and soon they would be faced with their biggest challenge yet.

Revenge

The Quraysh had suffered a humiliting defeat in the battle of Badr. Those people who had lost members of their family and friends during this battle were seeking revenge.

The leaders of the Quraysh including Abū Sufyān ibn Ḥarb, ʿAbdullāh ibn Abū Rabīʿah, ʿIkrimah ibn Abū Jahl, Ḥārith ibn Hishām, Ḥuwayṭīb ibn ʿAbd al-ʿUzzā', Ṣafwān ibn Ummayah and many more gathered together.

It was mentioned, that the caravan which was under threat had returned safely, meaning the caravan that Abū Sufyān had led and for whose protection he had sought help from the rest of the Quraysh. It was proposed that the investment the Quraysh made in the caravan should be shared out accordingly but the entire profit made by this caravan should be used to fight against Muḥammad ﷺ. In this manner, revenge could be taken by all those who lost their friends and family in the battle of Badr.

The Quraysh unanimously agreed to this, and the profit which totalled 50,000 dinārs was gathered together for this purpose.



Sūrah al-Anfāl

Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ then revealed the following verse from Sūrah al-Anfāl regarding this event:

إِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا يُنْفِقُوْنَ اَمْوَالَهُمْ لِيَصُدُّوْا عَنْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ
فَسَيُنْفِقُوْنَهَا ثُمَّ تَكُوْنُ عَلَيْهِمْ حَسْرَةً ثُمَّ يُغْلَبُوْنَ[1]

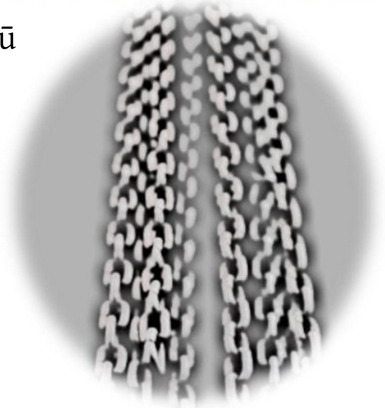
"Surely, those who disbelieve spend their wealth to prevent (people) from the way of Allāh. So, they shall spend it, then it will become remorse for them, then they shall be overpowered"

[1] Sūrah al-Anfāl verse 36

Abū ʿAzzah - ʿAmr ibn ʿAbd-Allāh al-Jumaḥī

Rasūlullāh ﷺ had freed Abū ʿAzzah after the battle of Badr. He had been one of the captives, but due to his poverty and large family, Rasūlullāh ﷺ took pity on him and let him return to Makkah.

Ṣafwān ibn ʿUmmayah asked Abū ʿAzzah to accompany them to Madīnah. Abū ʿAzzah was a poet so Ṣafwān asked him to assist them with his tongue, meaning with his poetry. Abū ʿAzzah informed him that he had been freed by Rasūlullāh ﷺ and he would not want to go against him.



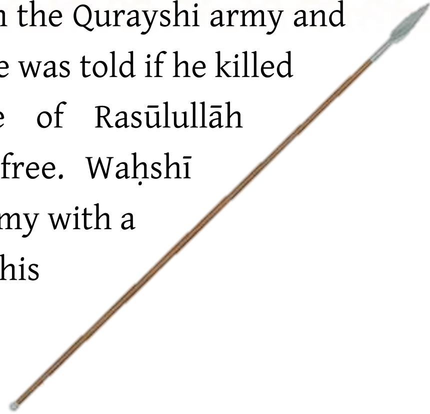
Ṣafwān then asked him to assist them with his presence. If Ṣafwān returned to Makkah after the battle, he would make Abū ʿAzzah a rich man. If Abū ʿAzzah did not return, Ṣafwān would treat his daughters as if they were his.

Abū ʿAzzah agreed and then went to the Banū Kinānah and encouraged them to battle by reciting some couplets.

Waḥshī ibn Ḥarb

Ṭuʿaymah ibn ʿAdiy was one of the Quraysh who had fallen in the battle of Badr at the hands of Ḥamzah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ. His nephew Jubayr ibn Muṭʿim had an Abyssinian slave called Waḥshī who was skilled in the art of throwing the javelin.

Jubayr told Waḥshī to go with the Qurayshi army and take revenge for his uncle. He was told if he killed Ḥamzah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ, the uncle of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, then he would be free. Waḥshī accompanied the Qurayshi army with a sole purpose in mind, to gain his freedom.



The Qurayshi Women

The Quraysh put a lot of effort into their preparation and even decided to take their women folk with them who could encourage the men to fight. They would recite poetry to urge them into battle and stop them from running away.

With the women present, the Quraysh would not want to leave them vulnerable so would fight even harder and not even consider fleeing from the battlefield.

There was a total of 15 women who accompanied the army. Some of their names were:

- Hind bint ʿUtbah
- Umm Ḥakīm bint al-Ḥārith ibn Hishām
- Fāṭimah bint al-Walīd ibn al-Mughayrah
- Barzah bint Masʿūd
- Rayṭāh bint Munabbih
- Sulāfah bint Saʿad
- Khunās bint Mālik
- ʿAmrah bint ʿAlqamah

ʿAllāma Zarqāni رَحِمَهُ ٱللَّٰهُ mentions that all of the above women embraced Islām except Khunās bint Mālik and ʿAmrah bint ʿAlqamah.

Messengers were sent to the Arab tribes to tell them to join the expedition against the Muslims. In this manner, an army of three thousand strong was assembled out of which seven hundred were armoured.

Abū Sufyān ibn Ḥarb was leading the army and they left Makkah on the 5th of Shawwāl, in the 3rd year of Hijrah.



ʿAbbās رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ informs the Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

ʿAbbās رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ had seen all the Qurayshi preparations and wrote a letter to Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ informing him of the situation. He sent the letter with a swift messenger and told him Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ must receive this letter within 3 days. If the Qurayshi army arrived in Madīnah without the Muslims knowing, then this would be very dangerous.

The Messenger left and delivered the letter to Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ immediately dispatched Anas and Muwannas رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا to find out information about the Quraysh.

They came back and informed Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ that the Qurayshi army was very close to Madīnah. Al-Ḥubāb ibn al-Mundhir رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ was then sent to determine the size of the Qurayshi force. He came back and gave a correct estimation of how large the army was.

It was the night of Jumuʿah, and the Companions رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ stood guard outside Masjid Nabwī as well as the outskirts of the city. Saʿad ibn Muʿādh, Usayd ibn Ḥuḍayr and Saʿad ibn ʿUbādah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ were among those who guarded the blessed Masjid.



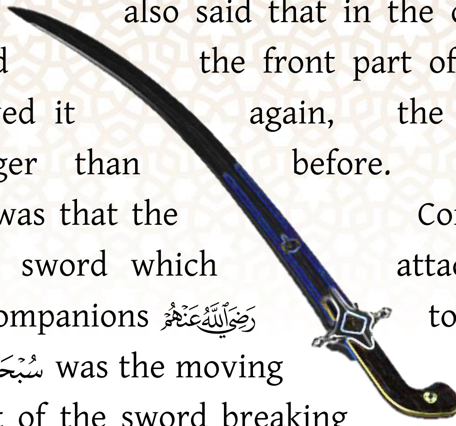
The Consultation

The morning arrived and Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ called the Companions رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهُمْ to discuss how best to confront the Qurayshi force.

There were two opinions. The elders from both the Muhājirūn and Anṣār preferred to stay within Madīnah and confront the Qurayshi army in that way. The younger Companions رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهُمْ who had not participated in the battle of Badr were eager to confront the Quraysh outside of the city.

Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said that he had seen a dream. He was in a strong coat of mail and there was a cow which was being sacrificed. The interpretation of this was that Madīnah was the strong coat of mail and the cow being sacrificed meant that some of his Companions رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهُمْ would be martyred. Therefore, his opinion was to fortify themselves into Madīnah and confront the Quraysh in this manner.





Rasūlullāh ﷺ also said that in the dream he moved his sword, and the front part of it broke away. When he moved it again, the sword became even stronger than before. The interpretation of this was that the Companions رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ were like the sword which attacked the enemy. To take the Companions رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ to fight in the path of Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ was the moving of the sword. The front part of the sword breaking meant some of the Companions رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ would be martyred in the battle of Uḥud. The sword becoming stronger and sharper than before meant, in subsequent battles, the Companions رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ would be stronger than before and be used even more against the enemy.

ʿAbdullāh ibn Ubay, the leader of the hypocrites was also asked for his opinion because of his intelligence. He said that whenever any enemy attacked Madīnah and the people stayed inside the city and encountered them, then they were victorious. If they went outside the city, then they were unsuccessful. He advised Rasūlullāh ﷺ not to leave the city. If the enemy were to force themselves into the city, then the men would fight them with



their swords and the women and children would throw stones at them from the roofs. If the enemy cannot enter the city, then they would return in low spirits.

Other Companions رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ insisted on leaving the city and encountering the Quraysh outside like Ḥamzah, Nuʿmān ibn Mālik and Saʿad ibn ʿUbādah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ.

Ḥamzah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ said:

والذى انزل عليك الكتاب لا اطعم اليوم طعاما حتى

اجادلهم بسيفى خارج المدينة

'By the One who revealed the Book to you, I will not eat any food until I fight the enemy with my sword outside of the city'

Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ led the Jumuʿah Ṣalāh, then advised and encouraged everybody for battle. He then ordered everyone to prepare for battle.

The Preparation of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

After ʿAṣr Ṣalāh, Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ entered his quarters. His two Companions, Abū Bakr and ʿUmar رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهُمَا accompanied him.

Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ was still inside when Saʿad ibn Muʿādh and Usayd ibn Ḥuḍayr رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهُمَا told the others that they had forced Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ to confront the enemy outside of the city even though the Revelation of Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ keeps coming to Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. It would be better if the decision were left to the opinion of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ.

Just then Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ came out of his quarters, donning two coats of armour and his weapons. The Companions رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهُمْ told Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ that they had mistakenly insisted against his opinion and this was not appropriate for them. They requested that he act upon his own opinion.

Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said 'It is not permissible for a Prophet to don his armour and then take it off until he has fought the enemies of Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ. Now go forth on Allāh's name and do as I command you and understand this, that as long as you remain patient and steadfast then victory and help from Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ is only for you.'

The Muslim Army leaves Madīnah

On the 11th of Shawwāl, on the day of Jumuʿah, after ʿAṣr Ṣalāh, Rasūlullāh ﷺ left the city of Madīnah with one thousand Companions رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ. ʿAbdullāh ibn Umm Maktūm رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ was left in Madīnah to lead Ṣalāh.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ was riding a horse with Saʿad ibn Muʿādh and Saʿad ibn ʿUbādah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا in front of him. The rest of the Companions رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ were on his right and left.

The Checking of the troops

The Muslim army reached Maqām Shaykhayn where Rasūlullāh ﷺ checked the army. Shaykhayn is the name of 2 mountains which are located between Madīnah and Uḥud. The red marker on the map below shows the approximate location of Maqām Shaykhayn with Masjid Nabwī to the right and the mountain of Uḥud to the left.



All those Companions رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهُمْ who were young of age were sent back. Some of these were:

- Usāmah ibn Zayd رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهُ
- Zayd ibn Thābit رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهُ
- Abū Saʿīd al-Khudri رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهُ
- ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿUmar رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهُ
- Usayd ibn Ẓuhayr رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهُ
- Aws ibn ʿArābah رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهُ
- Barā ibn ʿĀzib رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهُ
- Zayd ibn Arqam رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهُ

Imām Shāfiʿī رَحِمَهُ ٱللَّٰهُ mentions that 17 Companions رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهُمْ were presented to Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ who were fourteen years old. Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ sent them back as they were not mature. When presented to Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ the following year, when they were fifteen, they were given permission.



If you go to Madīnah today you will see a Masjid in this location called Masjid al-Shaykhayn.

Rāfiᶜ ibn Khadīj & Samurah ibn Jundab رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا

One of the young Companions was Rāfiᶜ ibn Khadīj رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ. He stood up on his toes so he could appear to be taller and Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ gave him permission to remain in the army. It was also said that he was a skilled archer.

Samūrah ibn Jundab رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ was the same age as Rāfīᶜ ibn Khadīj رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ. He said to his stepfather Murrāh ibn Sinān رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ, that Rāfīᶜ رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ had got permission and he had been left, even though he was stronger than him and could better him in a wrestling match.

Murrāh ibn Sinān رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ said to Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ that he had given Rāfīᶜ رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ permission but told his son to go back, even though he could beat him in a wrestling match.

Rāfīᶜ and Samūrah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا then wrestled each other upon the request of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. Samūrah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ beat Rāfīᶜ رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ so he was also given permission to join the battle.



The Betrayal of the Hypocrites

The Muslim army was one thousand strong whilst the Qurayshi army numbered three thousand. They were also far better equipped than the army of Rasūlullāh ﷺ.

Out of the one thousand, three hundred were led by ʿAbdullāh ibn Ubay who was the leader of the hypocrites. The hypocrites were those people who professed to be Muslim on the outside but inside they did not believe in Islām.

When the Muslim army were close to Uḥud, ʿAbdullāh ibn Ubay took the three hundred who were with him and returned to Madīnah. His excuse was that Rasūlullāh ﷺ had not listened to his advice and opinion therefore why should they risk their lives without a reason. They also said that this was not a battle, if they thought it was then they would help them.

The Muslim army was now reduced to seven hundred facing three thousand. The odds were now more than four to one in favour of the Quraysh.



The Revelation

Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ then revealed the following verse:

وَلِيَعْلَمَ الَّذِينَ نَافَقُوا
وَقِيلَ لَهُمْ تَعَالَوْا قَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَوِ ادْفَعُوا
قَالُوا لَوْ نَعْلَمُ قِتَالًا لَّاتَّبَعْنَاكُمْ
هُمْ لِلْكُفْرِ يَوْمَئِذٍ أَقْرَبُ مِنْهُمْ لِلْإِيمَانِ ۚ
يَقُولُونَ بِأَفْوَاهِهِم مَّا لَيْسَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ
وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَكْتُمُونَ ۚ [2]

"And in order to know those who are hypocrites. It was said to them, "Come on, fight in the way of Allāh, or defend." They said, "Had we known it to be a fight we would have certainly followed you." That day, they were nearer to disbelief than they were to Belief. They utter from their mouths what is not in their hearts. Allāh knows well what they conceal."

Out of the seven hundred remaining troops, only one hundred had armour and there were only two horses between them, one that

[2] Sūrah Āl-ʿImrān verse 167

was for Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and the other belonged to Abū Burda - Hāni ibn Nayyar Ḥārithī رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهُ.

Now two more tribes also thought about going back to Madīnah, the Banū Salamah from Khazraj and the Banū Ḥāritha from Aws, but Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ saved them and they did not return. Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ sent the following Revelation regarding this:

اِذْ هَمَّتْ طَّآئِفَتٰنِ مِنْكُمْ اَنْ تَفْشَلَا
وَاللّٰهُ وَلِيُّهُمَا وَعَلَى اللّٰهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ [3]

"When two of your groups were about to lose heart, while Allāh was their guardian! It is in Allāh alone that the believers must place their trust."

	Muslims	Quraysh
	700	3000
	2	200
	100	700

[3] Sūrah Āl-ʿImrān verse 122

The Night before Battle

Rasūlullāh ﷺ was still at Maqām Shaykhayn when the sun set. Bilāl رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ gave the Adhān and Rasūlullāh ﷺ led the Maghrib Ṣalāh. The Muslim army laid camp for the night in that place.

Muḥammad ibn Maslamah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ looked after the army for the entire night. From time to time he would circle the whole army and then come back and guard the tent of Rasūlullāh ﷺ.

When it came to the end of the night, Rasūlullāh ﷺ started to travel. When the time for Fajr arrived, the Muslims army was close to the mountain of Uḥud.

Bilāl رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ was given the command to give the Adhān. He gave the Adhān and then the Iqāmah. Rasūlullāh ﷺ led the entire Muslim army in Fajr Ṣalāh.



The Battle Lines

After Rasūlullāh ﷺ completed Fajr, he turned his attention to the army. The battle lines were formed with Madīnah in front of them and the mountain of Uḥud behind them.



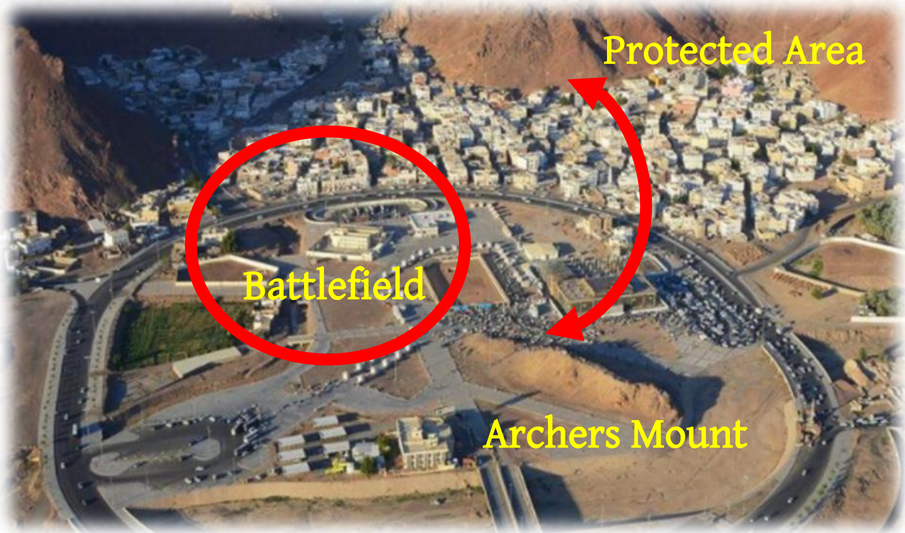
Uḥud lies about 3 miles north of Madīnah and is a group of mountains with many peaks. It is over 4.6 miles in length and at its highest point is 1,077 metres. It is the highest mountain in Madīnah. It is mentioned in many Aḥādīth including one narrated by Anas ibn Mālik رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهُ where Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

"This is a mountain that loves us, and we love it".[4]

[4] Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 4083

Archers Mount

Rasūlullāh ﷺ instructed fifty archers to be stationed on a small mound which was just to the south of Uḥud. The reason for this was to protect the Muslims army being attacked from behind.



The Qurayshi army would not be able to confront the Muslim army through the gap between the Archers Mountain and Uḥud.

ʿAbdullāh ibn Jubayr رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهُ was put in charge of them. They were given clear instructions that if they see the Muslims winning the battle, they should not move from their position. Also, if they saw the Quraysh gaining the upper hand over the Muslims, again they should not move at all.

In another narration it mentions they should not move even if they see the Muslims getting killed or collecting the spoils.

The Quraysh Army

The Qurayshi army had already arrived and laid camp close the mountain of Uḥud. As well as the two hundred horses, there were also three thousand camels. The women who had accompanied the army were reciting poetry and encouraging them to fight.

The main army was being led by Abū Sufyān ibn Ḥarb. There were five more leaders who were appointed over the various sections of the army.

- Khālid ibn al-Walīd oversaw the right flank
- ʿIkrimah ibn Abū Jahl oversaw the left flank
- ʿAbdullāh ibn Abū Rabīʿah oversaw the archers.
- Ṣafwān ibn Umayyah and ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ oversaw the foot soldiers.

All the Qurayshi leaders would later embrace Islām.



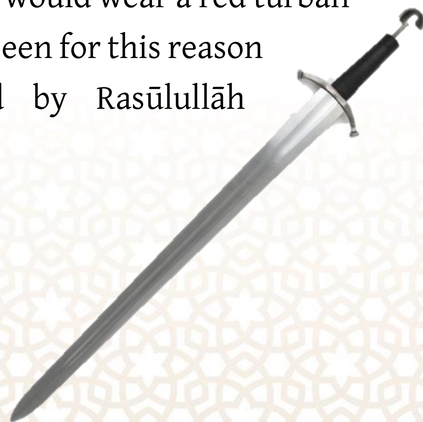
The Sword of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

When the two armies had both formed their battle lines, Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ took a sword in his hand and addressed the army of the believers. He said, 'Who can take this sword and fulfil its right?'.

Many of the Companions رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ came forward wanting to the take the sword but Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ did not give it to them.

Abū Dujānah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ (whose name was Simāk ibn Kharashah) got up and asked, 'O Messenger of Allāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, what is the right of this sword?' Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said that the right of this sword is to fight with it until it becomes bent. Abū Dujānah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ then said, 'I will take the sword with its right', in other words he would fulfil its rights. Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ then gave him the sword right away.

Abū Dujānah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ was a very brave Companion of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. At the time of battle, he would wear a red turban and walk gracefully. It could have been for this reason that he was given the sword by Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ as we shall soon see.



The Duels

As per the Arab way in warfare, the battle started off with a series of duels. The first person to come forward from the Qurayshi army was Abū ʿĀmir. He was a leader from the tribe of Aws in the days of ignorance and was known for his ascetic lifestyle. Due to this quality he was knows as 'Rāhib' which meant a monk. When Islām came to Madīnah, he did not embrace and moved to Makkah. Rasūlullāh ﷺ, rather than call him 'Rāhib', called him 'Fāsiq', which meant corrupt, or open sinner

When Abū ʿĀmir arrived in Makkah, he encouraged the Quraysh to raise arms against the Muslims and in the battle of Uḥud, he accompanied the Qurayshi army. He boasted that when the people of Aws see him, they will leave Muḥammad ﷺ and join him.

Abū ʿĀmir came out and called:

يا معشر الاوس انا ابو عامر

'O the people of Aws, I am Abū ʿĀmir'

The people of Aws replied:

لا انعم الله بك عينا يا فاسق

'O Fāsiq (open sinner), may Allāh never make your eyes cool'

When Abu ʿĀmir heard this reply, he turned back dejected and at a loss. He said that the condition of his people has changed.

ʿAlī رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ and Ṭalḥah ibn Abū Ṭalḥah

After this, the flag bearer of the Quraysh, Ṭalḥah ibn Abū Ṭalḥah came out and cried: 'O you Companions of Muḥammad صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, you think that Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ will send us quickly to Hell by your swords and he will send you quickly to Heaven at the hands of our swords? Is there anyone from among you who will go Heaven quickly by my sword or will send me quickly to Hell by their sword?'

As soon as ʿAlī رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ heard this, he went forward to meet his challenge. He took his sword and smote Ṭalḥah ibn Abū Ṭalḥah on his leg which made him fall to the floor. When Ṭalḥāh fell, his intimate parts were revealed which caused ʿAlī رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ to move back from him due to embarrassment. Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ asked ʿAlī رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ the reason for this and he told him. ʿAlī رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ then hit Ṭalḥah ibn Abū Ṭalḥah on the head and completed the duel upon which cries of Takbīr came out from Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and his Companions رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ.



Ḥamzah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ and ʿUthmān ibn Abū Ṭalḥah

ʿUthmān ibn Abū Ṭalḥah then took up the Qurayshi standard and came into the battleground. He recited the following couplet as he was advancing:

ان على اهل اللواء حقا ان تخضب الصعدة او تندقا

'It is incumbent on the standard bearers that whilst fighting, their spear is coloured with the blood of the enemy or it breaks'

Ḥamzah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ came forward to confront him and attacked both his hands and shoulder causing ʿUthmān ibn Abū Ṭalḥah to drop the standard. After a short while Ḥamzah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ defeated his opponent.

The Remaining Duels

Abū Saʿad ibn Abū Ṭalḥah then took up the standard for the Quraysh. Saʿad ibn Abī Waqqās رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ shot an arrow at him which hit him in the neck. Abū Saʿad advanced but it did not take long for him to also meet his fate.



After this Masāfiʿ ibn Ṭalḥah ibn Abū Ṭalḥah picked up the Qurayshi standard. ʿĀṣim ibn Thābit رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ went forward to meet and defeated him in one stroke.

Ḥārith ibn Ṭalḥah ibn Abū Ṭalḥah then took up the Qurayshi standard and again ʿĀṣim ibn Thābit رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ went forward to meet and defeated him as well in one stroke. Another opinion is that Zubayr رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ defeated him.

Kilāb ibn Ṭalḥah ibn Abū Ṭalḥah then took up the Qurayshi standard and Zubayr رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ went forward and defeated him. Up to this point, every single Qurayshi flag bearer had been defeated each time they advanced.

Then Julās ibn Ṭalḥah ibn Abū Ṭalḥah took up the Qurayshi standard and was defeated by Ṭalḥah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ.

Arṭāt ibn Shuraḥbīl was the next to take up the standard and ʿAlī رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ defeated him.

Then Shurayḥ ibn Qāriẓ lifted the standard and advanced. Once again, he was defeated but the name of the Companion رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ who defeated him is not known.

Then his slave whose name was Ṣuwāb took up the standard and came forward. Either Saʿad ibn Abī Waqqās رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, Ḥamzah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ or ʿAlī رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ defeated him.

In this way a total of twenty-two of the Quraysh were defeated one after another!

Abū Dujānah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ

Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ had given Abū Dujānah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ his sword. The Companion who was known for his bravery took out his red turban and tied it on his head. He then walked out into the battlefield with a swagger.

When Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ saw him walking like this he said that Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ severely dislikes this type of walk, except at a time like this.

He cut through the battle lines with all falling under his sword until he came right in front of Hind, the wife of Abū Sufyān. He lifted his sword but then put it down straight away, as he could not hurt a woman with the sword that was given to him by Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ.



The Martyrdom of Ḥamzah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ

Ḥamzah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ was displaying his bravery on the battlefield and was a cause of major concern for the Qurayshi army. Whenever he would raise his sword against anyone, they would fall to the floor. When the battle lines had been formed, Sibāʿ ibn ʿAbd al-ʿUzzā went out saying,

هل من مبارز

'Is there anyone to challenge me?'

Ḥamzah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ came out to challenge him and dealt a decisive blow. In one stroke Sibāʿ was defeated.

As mentioned earlier, Jubayr ibn Muṭʿim had sent his slave Waḥshī ibn Ḥarb to the battle. He had promised Waḥshī his freedom if he could kill Ḥamzah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ in revenge for his uncle Ṭuʿaymah.

Waḥshī was waiting for Ḥamzah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ and hiding behind a rock. When Ḥamzah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ passed him, Waḥshī attacked him from behind and pierced him with his spear which penetrated his body.
Ḥamzah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ walked a few steps then fell to the floor attaining martyrdom.



In the Musnad of Abū Dāwūd Ṭayālisī, it mentions that Waḥshī said when he came back to Makkah, he became free. He had only gone with the Quraysh with the intention of putting an end to Ḥamzah رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهُ, he had no intention of fighting.

After the conquest of Makkah, Waḥshī came to Madīnah with a party from Ṭāif to embrace Islām. Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ asked him to tell him what had happened with Ḥamzah رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهُ. After Waḥshī رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهُ told him, Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ asked him if possible, he should not come in front of him as it would remind him of his uncle.

Whenever Waḥshī رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهُ used to come in the company of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, he would sit with his back towards him. He always had this concern about what could he do to expiate this action of his. His expiation came in the form of using the same spear he used to martyr Ḥamzah رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهُ to put an end to Musaylama al-Kadhdhāb, the false Prophet, during the Khilāfah of Abū Bakr رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهُ.



The Martyrdom of Ḥanẓalah رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهُ

Abū ʿĀmir who had earlier challenged the Muslims, had a son called Ḥanẓalah رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهُ who had embraced Islām. During the battle, Ḥanẓalah رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهُ came face to face with Abū Sufyān, the leader of the Qurayshi forces. Ḥanẓalah رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهُ ran towards Abū Sufyān to attack him but Shaddād ibn Aswad attacked Ḥanẓalah رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهُ from behind. Ḥanẓalah رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهُ then attained martyrdom.

Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said that he had seen the Angels bathe Ḥanẓalah رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهُ with hail water from silver utensils. His wife was informed of this and it was found out that he had gone out in the path of Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ whilst he was still in the state of ritual impurity and was martyred in this state.

The Dream

The night before the martyrdom of Ḥanẓalah رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهُ, his wife had seen a dream. In the dream she saw a door open in the Heavens and Ḥanẓalah رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهُ entered through the door. Once he had entered, the door closed. His wife had understood that soon Ḥanẓalah رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهُ would be leaving this world.

After the fighting had finished, a search was carried out for his body and when they found it, they could see there was water dripping from his head. And this is the reason why he is known as Ghasīl al-Malāikah – the one who was bathed by Angels.

The Archers

The bravery shown by the Muslims in the battlefield took the wind out of the Quraysh. They started to hide their faces and fled from the battlefield. Even the women who had accompanied them started running towards the mountains.

The Muslims now started to busy themselves collecting the spoils left behind by the Quraysh on the battlefield.

Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ had positioned fifty archers on a small mound to the back of the battlefield to protect the Muslim army from a rear-guard action.



The archers had been told to not move from their station under any circumstance. They could see that the Muslims had won, and

were now collecting the spoils, so some of them also went forward.

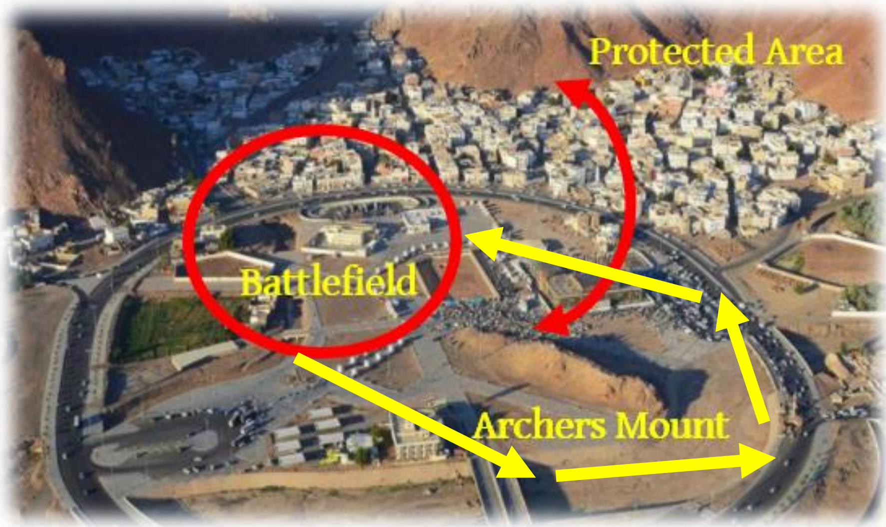
ʿAbdullāh ibn Jubayr رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهُ, who had been appointed by Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ as their leader, tried his best to stop them. He told them that Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ had stressed that they should not move from their position under any circumstance. But they did not listen and went forward to join the other Muslims who were collecting the spoils.

Initially fifty archers had been posted on the mound and now there only remained ʿAbdullāh ibn Jubayr رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهُ and ten of his Companions.



The Manoeuvre

Khālid ibn al-Walīd who oversaw the Qurayshi right flank, saw this window of opportunity and attacked the Muslim army from behind. He outflanked the Muslim army by taking advantage of the fact that there was now only limited protection for the rear of the Muslim army. You can see from the yellow arrows how the Qurayshi army managed to attack the Muslim army from behind.



ʿAbdullāh ibn Jubayr رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهُ and his Companions رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهُمْ were all martyred in this manoeuvre.

The Tide Turns

This reverse manoeuvre caused the Muslims battle lines to break and now the Quraysh approached Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيۡهِوَسَلَّمَ.

The standard bearer of the Muslims was Musʿab ibn Umayr رَضِيَٱللَّهُعَنۡهُ and he was positioned close to Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيۡهِوَسَلَّمَ. He fought the Quraysh valiantly until he was martyred. The standard of the Muslim army was now given to ʿAlī رَضِيَٱللَّهُعَنۡهُ by Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيۡهِوَسَلَّمَ.

Musʿab ibn Umayr رَضِيَٱللَّهُعَنۡهُ looked similar to Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيۡهِوَسَلَّمَ therefore someone called out that Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيۡهِوَسَلَّمَ has been killed. Upon hearing this distressing news, panic spread throughout the Muslim army. During this panic, the Muslims could not see the difference between friend or foe and their swords started to fall upon each other.

Yamān رَضِيَٱللَّهُعَنۡهُ was the father of Ḥudhayfah رَضِيَٱللَّهُعَنۡهُ. Ḥudhayfah رَضِيَٱللَّهُعَنۡهُ could see from a distance that the Muslims were attacking his father who was part of their own army. He called out to inform them of this, but the sheer confusion of the situation caused the warning to be unheeded.

Yamān رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ was martyred. When the Muslims found out it was the father of Ḥudhayfah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ, they were full of remorse. They took an oath saying they did not know it was him.

Ḥudhayfah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ then supplicated for them:

يغفرالله لكم و هو الرحم الراحمين

'May Allāh forgive you and He is the Most Merciful of the Merciful'

Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ intended to pay blood money to Ḥudhayfah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ but he refused to accept it. This caused the status of Ḥudhayfah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ to increase even more in the heart of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ.



Summary

The Quraysh had been smarting from their defeat at Badr. The unlikely victory of a small band of Muslims who had not been prepared for battle against a well prepared Qurayshi force had left a bitter taste in their mouth.

The Quraysh now decided to take the battle to the Muslims and mustered a force, three thousand strong and well equipped. They were accompanied by women as well who encouraged the soldiers through their poetry.

News of their plans was sent by the uncle of Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيْهِوَسَلَّمَ, ʿAbbās رَضِيَٱللَّهُعَنْهُ to his nephew. As soon as Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيْهِوَسَلَّمَ found out, he gathered the Companions رَضِيَٱللَّهُعَنْهُمْ to decide the best way to confront the enemy. Some of the Companions رَضِيَٱللَّهُعَنْهُمْ preferred to defend the city from within, whilst others wanted to confront the enemy head on in an open battlefield. Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيْهِوَسَلَّمَ chose the latter option.

The Muslim army was only one third the size of the Qurayshi force, so they were already at a disadvantage. However, before the battle, ʿAbdullāh ibn Ubay, the leader of the hypocrites abandoned the army with three hundred of his followers leaving the Muslims army numbering only seven hundred.

The Muslim army arrived at the base of the Mountain of Uḥud, which was three miles north of Madīnah. This would become the site of the second major battle in Islām.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ was a master tactician. He positioned the Muslim army with their rear towards the Mountain of Uḥud and the city of Madīnah in front of them. To protect the rear of his force, fifty archers were positioned on a small mound. Having the higher ground would give them the advantage and enable them to confront any of the Quraysh who tried to outflank the Muslim army.

The duels started and one after another, the Qurayshi standard bearers fell. A total of twenty-two Qurayshis were defeated consecutively. The battle raged and the Muslims fought bravely, however they did suffer casualties.

The uncle of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, Ḥamzah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ, was martyred by Waḥshī, who at the time had not embraced Islām. His master, Jubayr ibn Muṭʿim had lost his uncle in the battle of Badr at the hands of Ḥamzah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ and he wanted revenge. Waḥshī was told he could earn his freedom by killing Ḥamzah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ and this is what he did.

The Muslims gained the upper hand and the Quraysh started to flee from the battlefield. The Muslims then started to busy themselves collecting the spoils left by the Quraysh.

The archers who had been positioned on the mound saw this and thought victory had been achieved. They wanted to also join in collecting the booty.

ʿAbdullāh ibn Jubayr رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهُ told them that they had been given clear instructions by Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ to not abandon their post under any circumstance whether this be victory or defeat. Unfortunately, his pleas were not heard, and he was left with only ten Companions رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهُمْ.

Khālid ibn al-Walīd, one of the Qurayshi leaders who would later become an illustrious Companion, saw that the mound no longer had all of the archers on it, so they could now attack the rear of the Muslims army. He performed a flanking movement during which ʿAbdullāh ibn Jubayr رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهُ and his Companions رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهُمْ all reached the hereafter.

The Muslim army was now attacked from behind and this caused disarray in the Muslims ranks. The Muslim battle lines broke and now the tide of the battle turned in favour of the Qurayshi.

They saw Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and headed towards him. Musʿab ibn Umayr رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهُ lost his life protecting Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. Due to his resemblance to Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, someone cried out that Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ had been killed. Upon hearing this news, the Muslim army lost their senses and now confusion reigned among their ranks.

Sīrah of Muḥammad صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيۡهِوَسَلَّمَ
Part 17 – The Battle of Uḥud (I)

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